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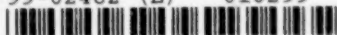
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LETTER DATED 29 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you my Government's view in connection with Security Council resolution 1226 (1999), adopted on 29 January 1999, on the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fesseha A. TESSEMA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



Annex

View of the Government of Ethiopia on Security Council
resolution 1226 (1999)

Any country whose territory is violated and whose sovereignty is challenged has the right to defend itself. But in the face of Eritrean aggression my Government did not answer force with force. To the contrary, we have sought to seek a solution to the crisis through peaceful means in the hope that justice and international law will prevail.

It is in this spirit that Ethiopia accepted in full proposals for a peaceful resolution to the crisis since day one. Not because all these proposals have been fully to our liking in all respects, but for the simple reason that we recognized that the proposals on the table were fair and balanced - and notably did not reward aggression.

Our acceptance of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) proposals for a framework agreement was based on our conviction that the proposals represented the best possibility to address the fundamental issues at stake in the crisis in a just manner. The OAU proposals, now on the table and awaiting implementation, do not leave open the possibility for misinterpretation and misrepresentation. They are clear, and their implementation is being urgently awaited by Ethiopia and the international community. In this regard, it should be reiterated that the only remaining business left with regard to the OAU peace proposal is its speedy implementation as called for on 17 December 1998 by the OAU summit meeting of the Central Organ for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held in Ouagadougou. Ethiopia is pleased that this is acknowledged by the Security Council in its resolution 1226 (1999), adopted on 29 January 1999, thus leaving no possibility for prevarication and misrepresentation by Eritrea.

While the past nine months have not been lacking in ideas and proposals to resolve the conflict, what has been consistently absent is the lack of readiness by the Eritrean authorities to accept the proposals put in front of them. The stubborn rejection of any formula that refused to ignore Eritrea's aggression and occupation of Ethiopian territory has been the singular cause for the absolute lack of progress in resolving the crisis. The Eritrean authorities reject proposals outright when it suits them, and on other occasions resort to prevarication and filibustering in the futile search for ways to torpedo peace efforts. A favourite tactic has been to pick and choose elements in a peace package and ignore features that they do not favour, in the process nullifying the whole effort and destroying the chances for peace step by step.

Even now with the OAU proposals for a framework agreement before them, the Eritrean authorities have chosen to prevaricate and to drag out the process with the objective of rendering the best efforts of OAU ineffective. That was the whole rationale behind the Eritreans' request for clarification from OAU on a proposal for peace which they knew left no room for equivocation and that was endorsed unanimously by the summit of the Central Organ after amendments submitted by Eritrea were rejected outright.

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We are encouraged by the fact that OAU has brought forth a proposal with no loopholes left to exploit. While Eritrea did attempt, once again, to stall the process by seeking so-called "clarifications" on a very clear document, OAU took up the challenge and provided its response. There is no fig leaf left for Eritrea for creating confusion. Now the game is up. What is expected of Eritrea is to accept and implement the proposals and desist from being a hindrance to peace and stability in the subregion.

We are again pleased that the Security Council for its part has adopted a resolution which leaves no room for misunderstanding and which provides the necessary and appropriate support to the effort being made by OAU. We recognize that the resolution is clear and unequivocal in its language. Not only does it not reward aggression, but also by making it clear that what is now awaited is Eritrea's acceptance of the OAU peace proposals with a view to ensuring their implementation, it sends the right message to Eritrea that the international community stands fully behind the OAU effort and the implementation of the peace proposal. The OAU peace proposal is a framework agreement awaiting implementation - a task which cannot at the moment be carried out because of Eritrea's intransigence. In other words, the OAU peace proposals are not meant to provide a basis for further negotiation, but rather a basis for resolving the crisis created by Eritrean aggression. We are pleased that the resolution leaves no room for misinterpretation in this regard.

It is in the light of all these factors that Ethiopia views this resolution by the Security Council positively and as a step in the right direction for strengthening the hand of OAU so that the Organization can proceed to the implementation of the peace proposal - a peace proposal which is anchored in the conviction that aggression should be reversed and violations of international law should not be rewarded.
